

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## EHB 1379

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Health & Long-Term Care, March 28, 2007

**Title:** An act relating to the qualifications of an applicant for licensure as a hearing instrument fitter/dispenser.

**Brief Description:** Revising the qualifications of an applicant for licensure as a hearing instrument fitter/dispenser.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Hinkle, Green, Campbell, Cody and Morrell.

**Brief History:** Passed House: 2/28/07, 96-1.

**Committee Activity:** Health & Long-Term Care: 3/28/07 [DP].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Keiser, Chair; Pflug, Ranking Minority Member; Fairley, Kastama, Kohl-Welles, Marr and Parlette.

**Staff:** Edith Rice (786-7444)

**Background:** A license from the Department of Health (DOH) is required to practice as a hearing instrument fitter/dispenser. The practice includes duties related to selecting hearing instrument systems, taking impressions for ear molds, and using nondiagnostic procedures and equipment to determine the appropriate fit of an instrument. Applicants for a license to become a hearing instrument fitter/dispenser must: (1) complete a minimum two-year education program; (2) not have committed unprofessional conduct; and (3) either complete an examination or hold a license in another jurisdiction with substantially equivalent standards to Washington's.

**Summary of Engrossed Bill:** An alternative to meeting the education requirement for obtaining a hearing instrument fitter/dispenser license is established. An applicant may use the alternative if he or she demonstrates to the DOH that he or she holds a current license from another jurisdiction, has been actively practicing in that jurisdiction for at least 48 of the previous 60 months, and submits proof of completion of advanced certification from the International Hearing Society or the National Board for Certification in Hearing Instrument Sciences. In addition, applicants using this method of obtaining a license must pass the hearing instrument fitter/dispenser examination.

**Appropriation:** None.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: Our state standards for fitters and dispensers is higher than other states. As a result, it is difficult for fitters and dispensers to come here from other states and still be able to work. This has created a shortage of fitters and dispensers. This bill will address this problem.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Richard Giles, Washington Hearing Society.